

The claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. A method of allocating traffic to a path or paths between a sending node and a receiving node in a network, wherein each message includes a QoS flag, the method including:
  - 5 - at the sending node, compiling a traffic status map of the available capacity on the or each practical path between the sending node and the receiving node;
  - allocating messages to paths on the basis of its QoS flag, and the available capacity of the paths.
- 10 2. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the QoS hierarchy allocates the highest priority messages to the shorter paths with available capacity in preference to lower priority messages, the lower priority messages being allocated to longer paths as traffic conditions require.
3. A method of allocating traffic in a network substantially as herein described
- 15 with reference to the accompanying drawings.

DATED THIS TWELFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2001  
ALCATEL